



FY2023 NDAA House Natural Resources Committee Provisions

This year, as part of the FY2023 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), the House Natural Resources Committee, under the leadership of Chair Raúl M. Grijalva (D-Ariz.), acted to address the global climate crisis by protecting and conserving oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes through one of the largest packages of ocean and Great Lakes bills in decades.

Key House Natural Resources Committee provisions in the NDAA will do the following:

Prevent Illegal Fishing and Forced Labor

The United States is the largest seafood importer in the world. Despite efforts to deny illegally and unethically harvested seafood access to U.S. markets, nearly 11% of total U.S. seafood imports in 2019—worth \$2.4 billion—were illegal or unreported fishing products. China is a major source of these fish products and a top country of concern for human rights violations in the seafood supply chain. This title strengthens laws surrounding illegal fishing/slave labor provisions.

Restore Resilient Reefs

These titles reauthorize and amend the Coral Reef Conservation Act to better address climate change, ecosystem loss, disease outbreaks, and other threats to corals. In addition, these titles establish new programs and funding opportunities for states and territories for coral research, conservation, and restoration and authorize the Coral Reef task force and U.S. Department of the Interior coral reef activities, focusing on U.S. insular areas.

Bolster Long-Term Understanding and Exploration of the Great Lakes, Oceans, Bays and Estuaries

To date, less than 5% of the ocean has been explored. Smart investments in ocean research and technology will contribute to a greater knowledge of the oceans and coastlines, as well as lay the groundwork for more growth and job creation in the attractive Blue Economy sector. This title directs existing ocean-focused interagency committees to coordinate overlapping data collection, align supercomputing and data storage efforts, develop cross-agency databases, and support consistent archiving practices. This title directs the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to create, maintain, and regularly update a publicly available website that provides links and information about all resiliency grant programs administered by NOAA.

Enhance Marine Mammal Research and Response

Increasing activity in the Arctic, including new ice breakers and shipping lanes by China, Russia, and other countries, threatens the fragile Arctic ecosystem and the marine mammal species that

depend upon it. This title directs analysis, planning, and cooperation to expand Arctic mammal rescue and response capabilities. In addition, it creates a "Marine Mammal Health Monitoring and Analysis Platform" (Health MAP) to collect and report data about the death of marine mammals, promoting interdisciplinary research, facilitating communication, and improving collaboration among scientists and observation networks.

Enhance Marine Mammal Conservation

Provides for conservation and grant programs that harness technology to reduce ocean noise, monitor marine mammals and help vessels avoid them, and improve technology for marine mammal conservation. Establishes a Puget Sound cetacean desk for monitoring and conserving whales in the Puget Sound.

Eliminate Shark Fin Sales

Since 1970, shark populations have declined by 70%, posing a major threat to ocean ecology and biodiversity. The fins from as many as 73 million sharks make it into the shark fin trade each year, with China having one of the largest markets. The U.S. continues to contribute to the global shark fin trade even though a number of states, airlines, shipping companies, and others have already banned it. The section prohibits the domestic sale of shark fins and creates a violation penalty under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

Update NOAA Corps

Makes updates to the NOAA Commissioned Officer Corps and provides authorities for the Office of Marine and Aviation Operations for acquiring new aircraft.

Enhance Ocean Exploration

Provides statutory authority for the National Ocean Mapping, Exploration, and Characterization Council and revises several programs at NOAA that support ocean and coastal mapping, hydrographic surveys, and spatial data collection.

Enhance Regional Ocean Partnerships

Regional ocean partnerships (ROPs) help coordinate interstate management. This provision authorizes Federal support for these partnerships by directing the Secretary of Commerce to establish new ROPs on request from the governor of a coastal state, and establishes procedures and requirements for designation and governance of ROPs. The provision authorizes \$10.1 million for the fiscal year 2023, with increases each year through 2027, and authorizes \$1 million for each fiscal year 2023-2027 for tribes and Indigenous communities to participate or engage with ROPs.

Study Stormwater Impacts on Salmon

This section authorizes a National Academies study on the effects of 6PPD-quinone on salmonids, aquatic species, and watersheds, including an economic analysis of declining salmon populations in the U.S. and its effects on the importation of salmon from other countries.

Name Brennan Reef

Richard T. “Rick” Brennan was a Rear Admiral and recent Director of NOAA’s Office of Coast Survey. Rick was deeply dedicated to NOAA’s mission and was an integral part of building partnerships across NOAA. He served in the NOAA Commissioned Officer Corps and nautical charting community for nearly three decades; having served on nearly every hydrographic ship in NOAA’s fleet. This section names a previously uncharted pinnacle in Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary “Brennan Reef” in his memory.

Update Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force

Makes updates to the non-indigenous aquatic nuisance species task force to provide technical assistance and recommendations to State and Tribal agencies for inspecting and decontaminating recreational vessels for the purposes of managing and controlling aquatic invasive species.

Update Sportfish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund

Makes technical fixes to the Sportfish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund and ties available amounts in the fund to the consumer price index.

Authorize NOAA Norfolk Transfer and NOAA Juneau Transfer

Authorizes the transfer of two NOAA properties in Norfolk, VA to the city and authorizes NOAA to convey a property in Juneau, Alaska, to the city.

Other provisions within the Natural Resources Committee’s jurisdiction will:

Amend the Sikes Act

Makes amendments to the Sikes Act to add the use of natural and nature-based features to promote resilience on military installations as part of the conservation program on military bases and installations. In addition, it makes the invasive species management program on installations permanent.

Address Global Wildlife Trafficking and Poaching

Reauthorizes the Presidential Task Force and interagency report on wildlife trafficking through the fiscal year 2028 and increases the focus of the task force on online wildlife trafficking activities.